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Leroy Garrett, Editor

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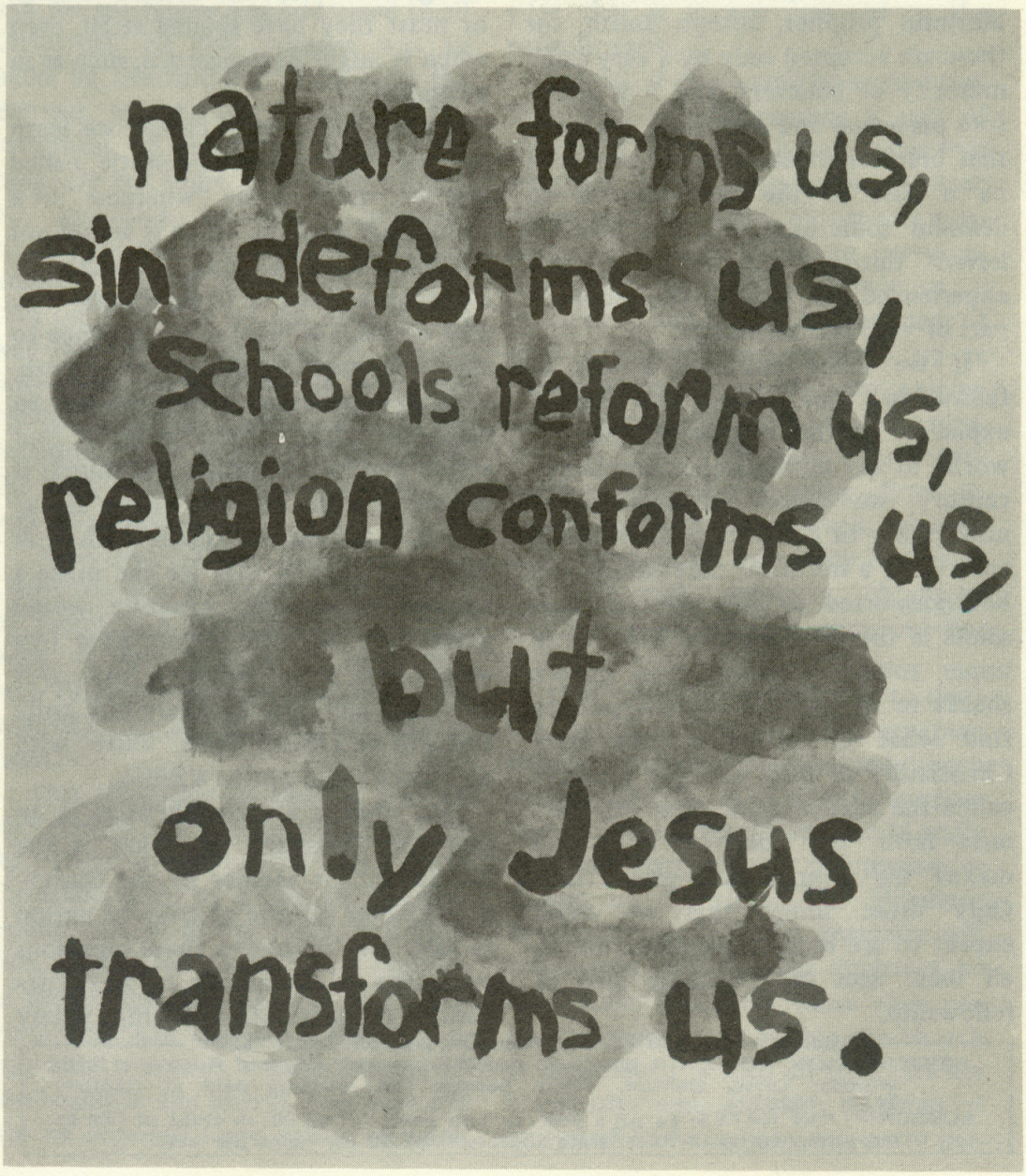

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Principles of Unity and Fellowship . . .

PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY

The point of this essay is that believers can and should be united upon the basis of universally accepted truths and these alone. It is the opposite of a parochial or provincial unity, which is not unity at all, but conformity. The church could never, for example, be united upon the claims of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, for these are accepted only by a very small minority of believers, and it is therefore parochial and provincial. To insist that brethren must speak in tongues to be a part of the fellowship is to demand something that but few believers through the centuries have experienced. It cannot therefore be part of "the catholic faith."

If we make anything a test of fellowship that cannot be rightly expected of the church around the world, in any circumstance and in any century, we violate the principle of universality or catholicity. If we could enter into a mythical time-tunnel and be transported to ages past and visit saints in the catacombs of Rome or in upper rooms in Asia or in private shacks in Africa, we would expect to find what C. S. Lewis calls *mere* Christianity or what our own pioneers called the ancient faith. It is the common faith, the universal faith that makes the church everywhere one. Only those things that we could expect to see in all these places and in all these ages can be made tests of fellowship.

Could we expect such believers universally to be wearing one particular name? Must the organization of the church be exactly the same? Must the order or "items of worship" be precisely like some of us have understood them to be? Must all these churches in all ages be a cappella in their singing, or must they have singing at all, even when it might be dangerous, such as in a catacomb?

In my philosophy classes we learn to talk about what Aristotle called *essence*, which is the "whatness" of a thing, that without which it would not be what it is. A knife, for example, loses its essence if it no longer cuts. The concept is helpful in reference to the "whatness" of the church. Whether in an upper room, a catacomb, or an elaborate edifice, there must be that which makes the church the church if indeed it is the church. We are saying that it is the *essence* of the faith or in being a Christian that we can make a test of fellowship. Aristotle would grant that a knife might have lots wrong with it and still be a knife, *if it cuts.* It might even be a very dull knife and still be a knife. But a "knife" with no blades could not be a knife.

So, what is *a mere* Christian or an *essential* Christian? Or what is the "whatness" or essence of the church, of whatever tongue or tribe or nation or age? The answer to these questions must also be the answer to what constitutes the basis of fellowship. Surely we have no right to require of any brother or sister what is not universally conceded to be essential to the Christian faith. Otherwise we become parochial in our demands and thus sectarian.

One of the most provocative stories in our own history is one that most of our people have never heard of. It was the first unity meeting following our separation from the Baptists, which began about 1830. The meeting was called by John T. Johnson in 1841, and the invitation was addressed to all Christians. Its real purpose was to make an overture for union with the Baptists, but the Baptists ignored the invitation, all except Dr. James Fishback. He and some 25 Disciple preachers, including Alexander Campbell, studied together the basis of Christian union. Campbell introduced a resolution on the unity of the church that was approved unanimously by an immense congregation. It was this resolution that gave significance to the occasion. How would it fare among the heirs of the Movement with which you are acquainted?

"Resolved, That the union of Christians can be scripturally effected by requiring a practical acknowledgement of such articles of belief and such rules of piety and morality as are admitted by all Christian denominations."

This resolution is another way of referring to the principle of universality. There is that central core of the Christian faith, to which all believers assent, and it is that core, and only that, that is the basis for the oneness of the church. Our opinions and interpretations, and our own peculiar doctrines and practices, will he a matter of forbearance and liberty, and they will not be imposed upon others or made tests of communion. Because of these differences in doctrine and in practice some believers may prefer to be apart from others and "do their own thing" (such as being charismatic), and, while this may not he ideal, the church will still be one in that such brethren will not consider themselves the only Christians but will reach out in love and accept all believers as their brothers and sisters. In spite of their charismatic preference, or whatever peculiarity it may be, they readily acknowledge that it is not *essential* to the catholic faith.

Indeed, it could well be argued that this spirit of forbearance is part of the essential core. It is imperative that we grant liberty of conscience to each other, and the right of private judgment. Otherwise we invite partyism, where the individual conscience is dictated to and where the free spirit of man is not allowed to grow up in Christ according to its own uniqueness. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Without this liberty there cannot be a growing, dynamic, loving relationship between believers and therefore no true Body of Christ. A dictatorial, arbitrary, dogmatic spirit may prevail in a sect, but not in Jesus.

That Campbell's resolution to unite the church upon universally accepted truths is the only *practical* solution is evident enough. It is folly to suppose that believers everywhere would unite upon any particular set of opinions or system of doctrines. The Mormons know that all believers generally will not accept their peculiar doctrines, so they must "convert" those they can and maintain a sect within the church at large. So it is with all sects. We are hopelessly and eternally divided if unity can come only by one party persuading all the others to conform to its own peculiarities.

When Campbell proposed his resolution for unity it was assented to by everyone in the large audience. The reason is simple. There is no other possible way for believers to be united—except to unite upon what nearly everyone agrees to! Our pioneers did not follow the spirit of this resolution as they might have, for they came not only to insist upon an acceptance of the ancient gospel, where there was and is virtual unanimity, but also the ancient *order,* where there was and always will be differences of opinion. The gospel is a matter of facts, which one believes or disbelieves. Opinions are inappropriate. But the ancient order, which is a reference to the organization, work, and worship of the church, lends itself to varying interpretations.

Robert Richardson, who may well be the best interpreter of the principles of reformation as introduced by our forebears, remained true to the spirit of Campbell's resolution for unity. In his series on the Reformation in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1841, he wrote: "Were we, indeed, asked to define theoretically, in terms the most brief and expressive the reformation which we urge, we should denominate *it—A generalization of Christianity.* It is in this character that it presents a basis of Christian union."

This is brilliantly concise and beautiful in meaning. He is saying that the purpose of their efforts was to unite Christians on the basis of a catholic or universal faith. He goes on to say that it is "the agreements, the universalities, the identities which secure harmony and peace."

Isaac Errett, who wrote for Campbell in the *Harbinger* and afterwards founded the *Christian Standard,* summarized this concept even more succinctly. What is the basis of fellowship between believers? *Christian character,* he said. That which really brings people together in love and peace is that they share the likeness of Jesus. Errett would no doubt say that he is presuming that such ones are baptized believers. But it is not simply that people are baptized, but that they are like Jesus, that makes fellowship meaningful.

It is with this point of commonality that we can begin in identifying the catholic faith in all the world and in all ages. When people trust in Jesus as the living Christ and yield their hearts to him as the Lord of their lives, they are truly his disciples. Wherever we find this precious faith we find the church. Along with Errett, we say this implies that they have been initiated into the Body by baptism even if not yet by immersion. While immersion is universally acceded to as scriptural, there are multitudes of believers, who manifest the Christ-like character, who are not yet persuaded that the scriptures decree immersion exclusively.

We should therefore declare ourselves one in Christ, and thus affirm with Thomas Campbell that the church is already one and cannot be other than one, with all those everywhere who make up the community of believers wherever they meet. And they *will* be an assembling community, gathering in the name of Christ. That is a universal. They may be burdened with some sectarian names (like a lot of the rest of us!) and they may not practice the ancient order as we understand it, such as breaking bread each first day, but they *are* the Body of Christ if they are baptized believers.

In our own congregations we can bear a loving witness to "No creed but Christ" (including unwritten creeds!), to baptism by immersion, to the place of the Supper and the Lord's day, to being "Christians only," even to a cappella music if we choose, to the rule of elders, to congregational autonomy, and on and on, in view of our own interpretation of scripture, which may well be right. But we cannot make these universals. We can hold them forth as the true doctrine of Christ, but we cannot impose them upon others except as they come to see them as we do. But everywhere and in whatever age we can expect certain universal manifestations of the faith if there is really a Christian church, and that is the *one faith,* a loving trust in Jesus and the likeness of Christ in their lives; *one initiation* or baptism into the community of believers; *one Body,* a congregation of believers meeting in his name and making a sincere effort to do his will in their lives and in their assembly. These summarize the seven unities of Ephesians 4.

Like Aristotle's dull knife that is nonetheless a knife, these people, despite whatever shortcomings they may have, *are* Christians since the ancient faith burns in their hearts and they constitute God's community on earth. They are our brothers and sisters, the world over, and *that,* and only that, can be the ground of our unity.

If we impose our own interpretations and order, which we may rightly treasure as the true teaching of scripture, upon those who have not yet grown to the maturity that we presume we have, and refuse to accept them as the Body of Christ along with ourselves, we become guilty of the great sin of apostate Christianity. It is the sin of being parochial and sectarian instead of catholic and universal. It is the sin of the great Roman system and Protestantism alike. We move above it when we recognize that the Church of Christ is out there in our world, scattered and divided as it may be, and made up of all those in every place who profess their faith in Christ and obey him in all things according to their understanding.

Finally, to quote Richardson again, "That alone which saves men can unite them." This is the principle of universality expressed in motto form. If we will heed its wisdom, we can help in bringing a bright, new day to our own people and to the church everywhere. —*the Editor.*

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JESUS IS ALIVE IN HISTORY, NOT IN A BOOK

Now to him who by his power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine —to him be glory in the Church through Jesus Christ for ever and ever, Amen! —Eph. 3:20-21 (Phillips)

By history I mean God's acts in the community of saints, the fellowship of believers, which has existed through the centuries. I am not talking about *written* history, which is really historiography, but the event of the church through the ages. This is a reality whether ever written about or not. We are all

a part of that ongoing history as all our sisters and brothers have been since the time of the primitive church. Very little of what has happened has made its way into the pages of history books. It is history because God has made it, not because men have written about it.

Every prayer you utter to the Father, every victory and defeat you experience in the faith in this troubled world, every deed you perform so as to glorify Christ Jesus, becomes a part of that history, especially when viewed in terms of your relationship to the community of saints. God is in His church, in His family, doing things. This is history. Now you know what I mean when I say that Jesus is alive in history—the ongoing experience of Christ and his church. The verse from Ephesians says it well: his power is within us, his family on earth, not merely as individuals, but in each of us as part of his church. His glory is in the church—not in any institution, book, creedal system or philosophy. His glory in the church means his presence in the church.

Jesus is not and cannot be alive in a book. A book, or books (Old Testament) foretold his coming and disclosed the nature of the New Covenant that the Messiah would bring. But that New Covenant was not a book, but a relationship in community. It was written not upon stones but upon hearts. The soul of man became God's dwelling place in a new community, not in temples made by hands. God has never dwelt in a book.

Another book (New Testament) tells of how Jesus came and formed a new family for God, based of course upon the Jewish family that had prepared the way for the new covenantal relationship. All this is God in history, working in His community which began with the call of Abraham. Once Jesus called that new family, he breathed his Spirit into it and dwelt in it. "I in them and thou in me" is the way Jesus put it to the Father. "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" is the way he put it to his disciples. From that day till now Jesus has dwelt in his Body. He never has dwelt anywhere else. He is alive, a reality in his church, nowhere else.

The Bible is that precious revelation that lets us in on the Story. It tells us about Jesus and God's mission in history, and that alone makes it worth dying for and more. It does more in that it tells of the emergence of the new society of believers, its strength and weaknesses, its victories and defeats, its trauma in a world that was set upon destroying it. The history, God in community, has gone on and on through the years right on down to our own situation. *We* are now that "colony of heaven" (Philip. 3:20) and it is there, with us, that Jesus is alive. He dwells nowhere else. He is alive nowhere else. One will find him nowhere else.

The "power within us" does not come simply by memorizing the New Testament. Paul wrote those words to a congregation of saints, and he told them that the power within them, which could do far more than they could imagine, was the presence of Christ within them as his Body—"the fulness of him that filleth all in all." *God is at work in you!* is the way he laid it on the Philippians (1:13). In being filled with the Spirit they were filled with Jesus (Eph. 1:13-14). One can have his head filled with scripture and yet have a heart empty of Jesus.

We must come to see the church as the Body of Christ, the dwelling place of the Spirit. When people assemble with us, they are not to see an efficient organization at work, a system executed or a doctrinaire position defended; but they are to see saints of God molded after the likeness of Christ. This is really where the world is to find Jesus—in the hearts and in the assemblies of God's redeemed ones.

To speak of "his power within us" is strange talk to many of our people. We know little about personal spiritual power. It cannot be found in buildings, budgets, programs or gimmickry. It is *Christ in you, the hope of glory!* If the Church of Christ is not made up of Christ-like people, it cannot truly be his Body. This is the final and only real mark of the church: it is the fulness of Christ.

This is why those ordinances that the scriptures associate with the assembly are so dynamic -- there's that word *power.* The Lord probably intends that baptism always be public, though it cannot be made a hard and fast rule, for that ordinance inducts one (in a public way) into the community of saints. He takes his stand with God's family. He steps into what God is doing in history, as it were, in being baptized. The Supper is also a public attestation that the community believes that Jesus is alive and with them at the Table. It is a communal act in community. It is a communion with Jesus in the assembly and by the assembly. If one cannot fill his usual place when the Table is spread, he is excused. If he has to be absent, the Body still gathers and proclaims that Jesus is alive, in their midst. As part of that Body, he shares in that proclamation, even if he is too ill to be present. To take "the communion" to the sick may be a pious act, but it betrays the real intent of the Lord's Supper.

So with the Lord's Day. It is something special because it is inseparably related to the assembly and the Table. Baptism is induction into the community. The Supper is the continuing expression of fellowship with Jesus by the community. The Lord's Day is when the community meets with Jesus in assembly. These are the dynamics of our religion. Power! It is power, not because we do it right or punctiliously, but because in our hearts Jesus is with us. "His power within us" makes all the difference in the world. Without that power we are like the bridesmaids who go forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps all trimmed but with no oil. — *the Editor*

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BEING AND WELL-BEING

When I am at home in Denton on weekends, I enjoy going by one of the rest homes before I assemble with the saints on Sunday a.m. and spend some time with my aged friends. The other morning I was sitting beside an aged sister, who has spent her 93 years with our non-Sunday School brethren. She is too feeble and ill for me to do much more than hold her hand, pray with her, and assure her of my love for her and the Father's love for her. I was sitting there holding her hand when my mind wandered, attracted as it was to the continued murmurings of her roommate, whose plight seems to be far worse than hers.

This woman talks in a nonsensical cadence every waking moment. She speaks words, even sentences, but they don't make sense. I was listening to her when I realized that my hand had slipped from Emma's, and she was seeking to retrieve it as if searching for a lost article in the dark. Only then did she tell me, "1 am blind and cannot see you." Even though it was my second visit I had not detected that blindness was still one more burden she had to bear. We talked about how she would one day see again, and when that glad day comes she will look upon our blessed Lord, and that is worth waiting for!

I've been thinking about Emma in reference to our mission to the world and to the church. Emma has *being* in that she has life. She lives, breathes, eats, sleeps, and negotiates her lot in life, such as it is. But she does not have *well-being.* Once she was young and gay, strong and vibrant, lively and active, making a mark for herself in this world—all that we would mean by well-being. But now, physically and mentally speaking, she despairs of life to the point that death would be a welcome relief. There is a vast difference between being and well-being.

There are many in the church who are in Christ and who therefore have being, but I fear that they do not enjoy well-being. I have sisters and brothers who really love Jesus and the church, but religion is burdensome and oppressive to them. They are going to church more but enjoying it less. They stab around at Bible reading but it does not excite them. The sermons they hear are usually boring to them if they bother to listen at all. If they manage to do any praying, it is likely to be vacuous and meaningless. Some would call them *carnal* Christians, but it may be that they are only discouraged. Or they may be locked in to a debilitating legalism and don't know how to get out. They need a breath of fresh air, but it never seems to blow their way. They may even be searching, but just haven't yet found the great secret.

We could say that our congregations are filled with such ones. I've had scores to tell me of how they dragged themselves to church for years when they actually dreaded going, or how they would leave the assembly worse off than when they went, or how they would come home after the assembly and cry their eyes out, or how they were simply turned off and washed out on the whole thing, but still hung on to the outward forms for the sake of duty or as a matter of habit. And there are many, of course, who are so blinded by our sectarianism and exclusiveness that they never really come to see the beauty of "preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

It isn't that I fear for the souls of such ones, as if to presume that they are doomed to a devil's hell. They have *being* in Christ in that they have been redeemed by God's love and mercy, but, like Emma in a physical way, they do not have *well-being,* and this is what I want for them.

Preachers are as much afflicted with this drab existence in Christ as anybody else, or even more so since they are often caught up in the mechanics of doing church. If those in the pulpit do not come across as spiritually dynamic, it may be that the resources of power in the Spirit have long since been clogged by the carnal things of this life. We all sing that "It is well, it is well with my soul," but it is not

all that often a reality in our lives. We have life in God to be sure, but have we become poor, sick, blind, and naked like that church at Laodicea? Jesus came not simply to bring life, but the *abundant* life. Not only does he want us born from above, but to grow in knowledge and goodness, and to have joy in the Holy Spirit.

The answer is what our Lord set before that Laodicean church, his own personal presence in their lives. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." We have no promise of well-being apart from Jesus' own presence in our lives. To invite him into our hearts and lives is the only answer, for only he is our peace. And it is peace that eludes us even as we diligently do church. To know Jesus is something else. He makes possible our well-being. Mere being does not touch God's intentions for us.

This is the point about divisions in the church—they work against our well-being as God's people. When I see a brother who is fearful of being with those "across the wall," or a sister who is uneasy in company with those a little different from herself, or a church that draws the line on another one for some infraction of party rules, I am concerned, not because I think they are all going to hell but because they are missing the joys of brotherhood. God placed us in His family that we might be brothers and sisters. He doesn't intend that we behave as if we were orphans or to treat each other as if we were strangers. God gave His son so that we might be reconciled in one Body through the cross—*bringing hostility to an end!* When we realize this and act upon it, it will mean well-being to ourselves and to the church. We act as if the hostility is *not* at an end.

I see preachers walk out in a huff when their Church of Christism (or Christian Churchism) is challenged. I see sisters who refuse to hear something different or to entertain a new idea. I see leaders of the church freeze in the face of change. While all such narrowness is to be regretted, it does not mean that God's mercy will not reach out to such ones, just as it reaches out to all of us who are His children. But the Lord intends that they be happy, free, growing, thinking, abounding disciples of Jesus. This kind of well-being is surely related to God's intention for us in another world. If we do not learn to be free, happy, knowledgeable, and responsible in our pilgrimage here, God's purposes for us will have to be realized in some other way beyond this world.

It is like building a dwelling-place. We do not simply want a house, but a home. Love, peace, joy, and goodness will be its furnishings. Jesus will be its Ruler and the Holy Spirit the ever-present guest, with all God's children in festive gathering. Our brothers who slip away into the attic and crawl into a corner *are* in the house. But we want them down in the banquet room sitting at the table that is covered with all the goodies, relaxed as one is when he is really *at home. —the Editor*

HE PUTS "ROMANS 13:8" ON HIS CHECKS

Several months ago Ouida and I sold a piece of property to a preacher down in East Texas. It shows that I am gradually overcoming my anti-clericalism! He is of the "non-denominational" variety. Not *our* kind of non-denominational, but the kind that opens a store front and puts up a sign reading "New Testament Church" and that calls themselves simply *believers* or *Christians*—and all that but a short distance from a "Church of Christ." They have their nerve, I'll say. But anyway the realtor got this Joe lined up for the sale, and we decided to go ahead with it, even if he was a preacher.

We did not meet until were were at the title office to close the deal. He kept talking about the Lord, how the Lord "leads" him to do this and that, and "If the Lord wills," which is not all that common for such occasions. I was somewhat on the grumpy side since I wasn't all that eager to sell the property, and I was only hoping that the Lord would "lead" the brother to meet his contractual obligation over the next several years. But this is one of my sins, my distrust of people, especially preachers, who are so definitely "led" of the Lord, for I have observed that the Lord sometimes "leads" them right out of town, leaving a string of debts behind them.

But not this preacher, apparently. He pays not only on time, but ahead of time, at least so far. Moreover, he always writes "Romans 13:8" in the corner of his check. Well, I knew how that verse read without looking it up. I said to Ouida, "1 hope he keeps believing that verse!" And I could only add, "I wish some other people that I could name believed that verse." Rom. 13:8 reads: Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

He sent another check just the other day for the upcoming month, and there was the notation "Romans 13:8." If *that* is what he means by being "led" of the Lord, then I for one will buy it. Jesus is our Golden Oracle, the full glory of God's revelation. He speaks to us through his appointed envoys, the apostles, and one thing he says is that we should pay our debts—Romans 13:8! He also says things like "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude" (1 Cor. 13:4-5). So, the Lord "leads" us into love and kindness and away from rudeness and arrogance, when we heed his word. This is not to say that he does not, through the in-dwelling Spirit, lead us in other ways, such as causing us to meet certain people or to read certain books. But I'm old-fashioned enough to believe that a diligent study of and a loving obedience to the word of God is still the best way to be "led" of the Lord. A man pays his debts because God's word teaches him to "Owe no man anything." That isn't bad even in the 1970's!

I've observed along the way that even Christians are more careful to pay debts that they *have* to pay, such as the house payment and the phone bill, than those debts that they *don't* have to pay, such as money owed a friend or a relative. Most of us are more diligent in paying the utility bill than in returning a borrowed book, and it isn't going to hurt anyone's credit rating if he moves away and "forgets" to pay the paper boy.

We all seem to agree that Romans 13:8 does not teach against contracting obligations. If I borrow money from you, and Matt. 5:42 does allow borrowing, I do not "owe" you until the time comes for me to meet the obligation. If I can't pay you as and when promised, I am obligated to make some satisfactory arrangement with you if possible. I should arrange my spending and non-spending so as to be ready to pay my debts when they are due. A little more of Rom. 13:8 in our thinking could spare us a lot of worry. God's way is always best! Young couples especially need to learn to live within their means—well within. That passage might well cause us to do without a lot of things that we really don't have to have. You might try it. The next time hubby wants to buy that "something" that can wait until some money is saved, suggest that he pray about it first *and* read Rom. 13:8. It is a joy to do without something when it means one is living closer to the scriptures.

These are hard times for people to "Owe no man anything," for we are assaulted by our "credit card culture." Our creditors realize it is easier for us to buy when we only need to hand over a credit card than to shell out the cash. I for one believe that *most* Christians, not all perhaps, should use credit cards very sparingly if at all. Why? Romans 13:8! The Christian who runs up a bunch of debts that she can pay only with difficulty runs the grave risk of becoming too much like the world.

I'm trying to teach this to Phoebe and her husband, another one of those young married couples that find it easy to spend more than they make. I didn't realize that it is so easy to get credit as when they recently listed all their outstanding debts. I went with them to see their various creditors around Denton. I got some of them to discount what was owed by paying the balance in cash. They were paying 36% interest on one debt. We borrowed enough cash to pay off all debts, and now they have but one obligation to meet each month. Before I did this, I wrote out an "Agreement" in which they "swore or affirmed" that they would contract no more debts until they got this one paid. I made it formal. They raised their right hands and promised it before God—and Ouida. And they both know that God will let them off the hook before Ouida will!

And I keep saying, *"Learn to do without! Don't buy it until you have money to pay for it!* In *most* cases, that is. I believe Phoebe is learning. With fewer debts, and without the habit of making still others, she is a happier person. "Owe no man anything;" God hath spoken, and it is the best of wisdom in this credit-oriented world of ours.

But that isn't all that God says in Rom. 13:8. How penetrating are those words " . . . except to love one another." Recently an old friend, who has come up the hard way, confided his financial statement to me. His assets totaled well beyond a half million. Below this list were his *Debits*, and here he had typed the word None. "You owe nothing at all, to anyone anywhere?" I asked him. He owed not one dollar, which is unusual even for the well-to-do. But I reminded him of the one debt he has, being a Christian, that he can never pay, and this is the debt of love.

It makes a person feel freer when she rises in the morning out of debt. "I don't have to worry about owing anybody anything today," she can say

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Pilgrimage of Joy . . .

ON BOARD THE *QUEEN ELIZABETH*

W. Carl Ketcherside

In these days of almost casual tourist travel it is difficult to explain the problems incurred in going to Great Britain in the early part of 1947. We had been in close contact for three years with Albert Winstanley, an outstanding young preacher of the gospel from Lancashire, who was by this time in Newtongrange, near Edinburgh, working with the Scots brethren. He contacted the various districts and we had drawn up an itinerary which would keep me occupied almost every day while we were in Great Britain. Since the first contact with Adam and George Bruce in Windsor, Ontario, in 1929, correspondence had been exchanged with saints abroad, and now sixteen years had elapsed, and we were waiting for a frightful war to cease.

On May 7, 1945, at a ceremony in the headquarters of General Dwight Eisenhower, at Reims, General Alfred Jodi signed an unconditional surrender of Germany's armed forces to the Allies. On September 2, just four months later, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz accepted the formal surrender of Japan aboard the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Vast areas of the cities in England lay in ruins. The task of cleaning up the rubble and restoring order from chaos would take many months.

I contacted a steamship company representative who said there were no sailings yet and even if there were I would have to secure a priority from the State Department. The State Department informed me there was a doubt the English Government would approve travel at the time. I went to the British Consul who asked me to make application to His Majesty's Passport Approval Bureau. The bureau notified us they would grant a visa for travel in the United Kingdom. The Cunard Lines told us they had a waiting list "a mile long" when passenger traffic was resumed. We wired New York and found that the *Queen Elizabeth* was scheduled for her first eastward trip, after converting from a troop-carrying vessel, at the very time we wanted to go.

After our reservation was confirmed we set about getting a passport. It was not easy because of the war restrictions still in vogue and it was necessary to file three notarized letters from the Manchester Avenue congregation before we were granted permission to go. When all of the legal requirements had been met other details had to be arranged. The children were in high school but Nell's father and mother agreed to come to Saint Louis to look after them during our absence. It was not easy for them because her father was the mayor of Flat River, as well as an elder in the local congregation.

Because of severe food rationing in the United Kingdom we arranged for congregations to send food parcels to help out. Some items were in shorter supply than during the war, among them fats, sweets, fruits and soap. Regulations permitted the sending of only one parcel per week by any person

or firm, and the weight of each parcel was limited to 22 pounds. We assigned various areas in Great Britain to congregations which wanted to help, and each congregation sent one parcel per week for three weeks, making a total of 66 pounds sent to each place. Manchester Avenue congregation sent to the Lancashire District; Hartford, Illinois to Birmingham; Anderson, Indiana to Belfast, North Ireland; while other brethren sent to Kircaldy, Glasgow, London, etc.

When it was announced publicly that I planned to make the visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of the brethren, it apparently created consternation in the ranks of the "mainline" Churches of Christ in the United States. They resolved to thwart it at all costs. The political propaganda machines were turned on full blast. All who had any relationship with congregations in Great Britain, especially American servicemen who had been stationed there, were urged to write and insist that my visit be cancelled. It was decided that the one person best qualified to offset any influence I might exert was John Allan Hudson.

Brother Hudson, who is best known as the originator of the Old Paths Book Club, had served as the minister of Southwest Church in Los Angeles, where he assisted the George Pepperdine Foundation, but was currently with the congregation at 39th and Flora Avenues, in Kansas City. He was well-known to the British brethren because of his work in Birmingham, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. With their characteristic zeal for local autonomy, a group of preachers met together to plan the strategy for stopping my work in Britain before it began. It was decided the best way to do it would be to support a "faithful preacher" in England for a whole year, preferably Brother Hudson. His chief objective would be to keep the British brethren from hearing me. A few weeks before I left home I received this letter from a brother in Britain:

> Brother John Allan Hudson has written to say he is flying over here to be in Britain before you arrive. I thought I ought to tell you this, so that you should be prepared. Yesterday I learned that he had decided to come to Britain (supported by churches in the U.S.) for twelve months. This was to be from April onwards, but apparently, on hearing of your proposed visit, he decided to come earlier. You may draw your own conclusions from this. But I do want you to know it will in no way interfere with your visit, or upset the arrangements in hand. There is much I want to discuss with you regarding Brother Hudson's visit, and we shall be able to talk it over thoroughly while you are here.

The "Central Intelligence Agency" of the American Churches of Christ did its work well. Form letters were sent to the elders of many of the congregations where I was to speak. Later on, after Nell and I had been guests for several days in the homes of such brethren they would bring out the letters and we would read them and have a good laugh about them. They uniformly classified me as

dangerous, divisive and destructive of the peace and welfare of the body of Christ. All of them made dire predictions of what would happen to the British churches as a result of my coming. One of them concluded with the frightening admonition, "You have been warned!"

Our American brethren who are accustomed to seeing elders "roll over and play dead" or "jump through a theological hoop" when certain preachers issued an ultimatum reckoned without the British brethren. They did not understand the innate sense of fairness which caused them to hear a man out before assessing him as guilty. They did not take into account the quiet stubbornness which resented interference from across the Atlantic. I am afraid some of the Scots had stereotyped Americans, perhaps from the movies, and thought they all wore wide-brimmed hats and cowboy boots, and slapped strangers between the shoulder blades and said too loudly, "How you doin' podner?"

I went one day to visit a precious aged sister who lived in a tiny stone cottage in a colliery village. She spoke with a brogue as thick as porridge. You could have sliced it with a knife. If her daughter had not been there to interpret neither of us would have known much about what the other was saying. But it was apparent she liked me from the start and I loved her and the cozy little "hoose" in which she lived. When I led a little prayer and was preparing to leave she said she was pleased I had not shown up wearing a big "bonnet" and "yelling like a cooboy."

One day at Ulverston, I was sitting before the grate with Brother Walter Crosthwaite, the sage of the Old Paths movement, and one of the saintliest men I have ever met. He was preparing tea in a soot-blackened kettle. Neither of us had said anything for several minutes. Then he spoke, almost as if in reverie and to himself. "All of the real problems which have plagued the churches in Britain in the past have come from America." After a pause he added, "Most of them from Texas." That day he paid me the highest compliment I received in his country. "I thank the Father for allowing Nell and you to come, and for making it possible for you to stay in our humble abode." He did not realize, in his unsurpassable humility, that to be with him was a mountain-top experience I could never forget.

Now we will get back to our trip. On Tuesday morning, February 18, a group of thirty brothers and sisters gathered with us for breakfast at the Fred Harvey Lunch Room in the Saint Louis Union Station. After we had eaten together, Nell and I bade our children and the others a rather tearful farewell, and boarded the famous *Sunshine Special* pulled on its eastern journey over the Pennsylvania Lines track. Twenty-four hours later, at 7:30 a.m., we arrived in New York City with thirteen hours to spend before boarding the huge ship which was scheduled to sail in the early morning hours.

Since neither of us had ever been in New York City we were like "babes in the woods," gaping and gawking at soaring skyscrapers, and "sunburning our tonsils" gazing upward in open-mouthed amazement. Fortunately, no city slicker buttonholed us to try and sell us the Brooklyn Bridge. We had heard about Automats but had never seen one, so we ate a late breakfast at one and then went on a

walking tour of Rockefeller Center. From the 70th floor of the RCA Building we could see the *Queen Elizabeth* lying in dock at pier 90. Further on we could make out the Statue of Liberty which we would pass next morning.

At 8:30 o'clock that evening we joined the throng milling about and boarded the greatest vessel of her day. Since that type of transoceanic travel has now passed away, supplanted by air transportation, I would like to describe one of the queens. The other was the sister ship the *Queen Mary.* The *Queen Elizabeth* was rated at 83,673 gross tons, with 14 decks. The vessel was more than five city blocks long, 118 feet wide and 234 feet from keel to masthead. The total space available to passengers for deck games and strolling exceeded in area 2½ football fields. There was even a special exercise area for dogs and each day the pampered pets were brought from the ship's kennels to be paraded around.

There were three anchors, each of which weighed 16 tons, and 2,000 portholes containing 2500 square feet of glass. There were 30,000 electric lights and 4000 miles of wiring. In all there were 35 public rooms—lounges, smoking rooms, dance halls, restaurants, children's playrooms, libraries, swimming pools, gymnasia, and three theaters. One of these seated 338 persons. The area of the First Class Restaurant was 13,133 square feet. On the main deck was located the winter garden with a profusion of fresh flowers. Here the ship's orchestra played classical selections at afternoon tea and again at night. Here also one could obtain free a copy of the "Ocean Times", a newspaper published on board each night.

On "A" Deck there was a large shop retailing everything from safety pins to men's shirts. On the same level was a barber shop for men and a beauty shop for women, as well as a smoking lounge with comfortable seats for several hundred. **"B"** Deck contained the nursery, a tourist gymnasium, a cinema and a large library. I checked out a copy of "This Man Truman"; written by an Englishman. I got a bang out of some of the expressions such as "biscuit-barrel politics", which is as close as the British can get to our "cracker-barrel politics." Winston Churchill was right. We are a single people separated only by a common language.

We traveled "tourist" which was cheapest. Our stateroom had a lower and upper bunk-style bed, wardrobe, dressing table, chair and wash basin with hot and cold water. The space was restricted and while one did not actually need to back out into the corridor to turn around it would have helped. It was our home for six nights, the last at the expense of Cunard Lines. We warped into the dock at Southampton promptly at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25. Tourist passengers were to disembark at 4:00 p.m. Then it happened! After part of our luggage was already off, a dock strike was called and none of us could leave the vessel.

Passengers became infuriated. They besieged the Purser's staff. There was cursing, shoving and yelling, but all to no avail. Staterooms had to be made up with clean linens and the chefs had to serve an extra dinner and breakfast. Although we were sorry to disappoint the brethren waiting for us at Waterloo Station in London there was nothing we could do. After dinner the Winter Garden was

crowded but there was no orchestra. Without asking permission I mounted the platform, took over the microphone, and called for attention. I pointed out what an extraordinary opportunity this was to become acquainted and to hold an open forum on world conditions. We had people present from many nations, we had just seen the end of a disastrous World War, and I felt we should quit talking about our own temporary inconvenience and discuss openly our divergent views of world problems.

I suggested we stay on each subject exactly one hour and allow any man or woman to speak. We discussed marriage and divorce, then family responsibility and authority, and last of all the changes taking place in moral and ethical values. I adjourned the meeting at midnight over the shouted protests of many who wanted to continue. It was interesting to see how quickly order had developed out of chaos. The meeting was made to order for me. As the self-appointed chairman I injected the teaching of the Bible into the discussion at the end of every speech. If anyone asked a question of the chair, I answered it with the words, "Of course, the Bible says..."

The next morning we abandoned ship at 9:00 o'clock, and exactly an hour later the boat train pulled out for London. Immediately evident were the signs of the bombing raids made on this great harbor city. Whole blocks were wiped out. Fire-gutted buildings were everywhere. Our train arrived in London promptly at noon. We stepped into a new world. At home we always "checked our baggage" but in London we "registered our luggage." The station was huge and there were several large restaurants. We chose one and ordered our luncheon. It consisted of pork and peas cooked together, mashed potatoes, spinach, roast potatoes, and coffee. If that sounds like a lot of potatoes, it is because this was one of the few items not rationed.

After we had eaten we boarded a taxi and went madly dashing down the wrong side of the street toward the friendly home of Brother R. B. Scott.

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DOWN HOME

The Saint Louis Forum is scheduled to be held at Saint Louis Christian College, 1360 Grandview Drive, Florissant, Missouri 63033, December 28, 29. There will be four sessions in which representative men will present their thinking on issues of interest, and a two-hour session in which anyone may speak on the question, "What Do You Think is the Greatest Threat to Our Christian Witness?" The questions for special treatment are as follows: "What Should be our Relationship with Believers in Christ in denominations outside of our Restoration Movement Heritage?"; "Is Baptism of the Holy Spirit Available to Believers Today?"; "To What Extent Did First Century Culture Affect the Content of the New Testament and its Demand upon Believers?"; "Is the Practice of Having a Man to Serve as the Pastor in a Congregation Having Elders in Harmony with the New Testament Scriptures?"

Charles Boatman and myself will preside over the sessions. Further information can be secured by addressing Charles at the college address given above . . . There were 650 persons registered for the Family Camp sessions at Camp Wi-Ne-Ma, Oregon where John Koekkoek and myself were the speakers. It was a rich experience in fellowship in the Spirit. . . The Brown County Camp in Indiana was the site of a Men's Meeting which brought together brethren from Christian Churches and Churches of Christ for a remarkably uplifting meeting in which I spoke three times on the responsibility of all of the saints to minister to one another . . . People from various and divergent backgrounds shared in an encounter at High Hill Camp, near Saint Louis, arranged by Oak Hill Chapel. It was a time of genuine sharing in mutual love . . . Some 1300 registered for the Florida State Christian Convention held in Jacksonville. I spoke both nights and at a luncheon and conducted two workshops in the notable events of the restoration movement history . . . I am looking forward to being at Escondido, California January 8-11, where we will have gatherings both day and night . . . On January 25-27 I will be at Grayson, Kentucky with faculty and students of Kentucky Christian College . . . February 22-24 will find me at Fort Myers, Florida .. . April 7, 8 I will be speaking at the Ohio State Youth Rally at Canton, and the following week, April 12-14 I will be at Puget Sound College of the Bible in Seattle, Washington . . . We are sending free to every college student who requests it a copy of the 192 page clothbound book *One in Christ.* The request must he made by the student himself and must mention the school where he is enrolled. The address will be found at the bottom of this column . . . I have just finished a series of 36 talks on the Revelation letter. These contain many sidelights on prophecy in the old covenant scriptures as well. Tapes may be secured on the entire series or upon special themes in Revelation. For a list please write to T. N. Ratliff, 9729 Calumet Drive, Saint Louis, Missouri 63137.. . If you would like to hear my presentation on what our attitude should be toward sincere unimmersed believers in the Lord, you may send $2.25 and ask for Cassette E2-5, on the theme, "Birth and Adoption." While you are at it you may want to send another $2.75 and secure Number C4-7 which has a 90 minute presentation of my position on Charismatic Gifts. Address requests for these tapes to Vernon Woods, Box 319, Turner, Oregon 97392 . . . A meeting to which I am really looking forward is the one with Scottdale Church of Christ, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, March 8-10. I have been trying to get there for several years and now a date has opened. For information write Bob Chambers, 215 North Chestnut, Scottdale, Pa. 15683 ... We would like to send you copies of "The Authority Totem" which puts its finger on the reasons for our sad divisions. You can secure ten copies by enclosing a dollar in your request. — *W. Carl Ketcherside, 139 Signal Hill Drive, Saint Louis, Missouri 63121.*

Alexander to Diogenes: "What are you looking for?" as he looked at a parcel of human bones. Reply: "That which I cannot find. The difference between your father's bones and those of his slaves."

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MARVIN BRYANT'S MINISTRY

In our May issue we made reference to some of the "converts" of the Bryant-Shank ministry, which is designed to reach denominational preachers, as being "bankrupt." Marvin Bryant objects to this description, so I am pleased to retract it for the sake of peace. One of Marvin's own co-workers, writing in the Aug. 2 *Firm Foundation,* appealed for one of these men with: "We desperately need to place Herb NOW with a good church . . . This arrangement would allow him to 'get his feet on the ground' in the shortest amount of time." This describes the plight of a number of these men better than the term I used, and yet it conveys what I had in mind. Their situation often appears "desperate" and they need to "get their feet on the ground." One former Presbyterian preacher was advertised as wanting to come over to us. He was at that time working in a restaurant. It is to be expected that this kind of ministry would attract the "desperate" kind, as well as some of the more responsible kind. We do not fault Marvin for this, and we are not trying to give him a hard time. It is that we simply cannot believe that this ministry, in the main, moves us away from the sectarianism that we so badly need to overcome. Some of Marvin's men are not only not of the "desperate" category, but it is predictable that some of them are going to be of help to us in working toward a non-sectarian Church of Christ. I met some of these when they had their annual meeting in Dallas this summer, and I rejoice. This is one of the surprises of the past few years, the help we are getting from the extreme right. Some of our most dedicated reformers, young and bright, are from the so-called "anti" group, the non-class group, and the one-cup persuasion. Marvin will also make his contribution. But still I would like to discourage this program in that it nourishes our exclusivism. I especially object to that aspect of the program that assumes that our brothers in the Christian Church are to be 'converted' or 'reached' and brought over to the Church of Christ. This serves to negate the many unity efforts that have taken place and are taking place within our divided brotherhood. — *the Editor*

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OFFICE NOTES

We will send you 18 back copies of this paper, reaching back ten years or more, for only 3.00, and that includes the postage. Our more recent subscribers might take advantage of this so that they can see what we've been saying in years past.

The Word Abused is the bound volume of this journal for 1975 and 1976, and you may order a copy for only 5.95, which is less than the subscription price for two years. For 5.50 we will send *you The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today,* which is our bound volume for both 1973 and 1974.

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Some of Elton Trueblood's finest stuff is in *The Yoke of Christ,* where he defines a Christian as one who wears Christ's yoke. There are 13 addresses. Only 3.25.

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All our prices include postage and mailing.

Understanding the New Testament Book by Book, by Peter Paul John, has received high marks as a very helpful study tool. 3.20.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

At the present time I am counseling a 19 year old girl who has a nervous disorder. It's been nine long months, but with the grace of God we now have her driving, and she takes more interest in herself. I'm an amateur at this sort of thing, learning that a little love and sincerity can go a long way. This sense of futility is becoming commonplace. People feel they are but cogs in a machine,

impersonal and insignificant among earth's billions, just a number that doesn't count, instead of believing they are created by God in His own image and loved by Him. — *Virginia Cistaro, Point Harbor, NC*

We have tried the whole gambit—Baptists, Assembly of God, Lutheran, etc. Nothing seems to fit like it did in Oregon, our old stomping ground. They want to vote us in, and after our C of C background, we bristle and want to be accepted out of love and not votes. Besides, we have Mormons coming down over our ears and the churches generally are legalistic, the C of C being the worst. Help! — *Joan Martin, Orem, Utah*

The ecumenical movement is made up of denominations who do not view themselves as the whole church, but who recognize a mutual need for each other of all the sections of the church. As long as certain denominations consider themselves as the only true church they simply do not have the attitudes and motivations to participate in the ecumenical movement. — *Corner Shacklett, Westfield, NJ*

The underground Church of Christ had a wonderful praise and prayer meeting last night. — *Clara Logan, Montgomery, AL*

You might be interested to know that Stan Paregian is near Stillwater, ministering at Stroud, OK. They are having a Restoration lecture at his church involving dialogue between the three branches of our people on the silence of the scriptures. — *John Lacey, Stillwater, OK*

You may do more good than you realize by sharing this journal with others like yourself. Many of our most appreciative readers were introduced to us by someone like you, who was thoughtful enough to share. We make it economically feasible for you to do this. Send us five or more names at $2.00 each and we will send them the paper for an entire year. Nearly all of you know others who would be challenged by what we have to say. "You are our epistles" in this regard, for we have only our readers as witnesses to the value of our ministry. Please consider this prayerfully. Send subs to 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.

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Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

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